

# WOOSTER SAUCE



The Quarterly Journal of The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)

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## SOCIETY SPLICE!



Those attending the Philadelphia convention of The Wodehouse Society in October were rewarded for their willingness to travel by the sensational news imparted on the first evening by our Chairman, Norman Murphy.

He announced that the previous weekend he had married the retiring President of TWS, Elin Woodger, thus cementing a trans-Atlantic alliance of which our political masters would undoubtedly approve. Most of those attending were taken totally unawares by the public confession, made in Norman's usual charismatic style.

Elin, who has been a tower of strength in TWS over the past decade, helped to organise the convention in Boston in 1995, and under the *nom-de-Plum* Aunt Dahlia has been joint editor of their journal *Plum Lines* for several years. A professional writer, she says that her clients have promised to support her despite the distance over which they will have to communicate. The extent to which Elin will be able to continue to actively support TWS activities will come under close scrutiny, as she has now moved to London.

Her next publication is an *Encyclopaedia of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1803-1806)*, which she describes as a major event in the history of the United States.

Our heartiest congratulations go to the happy couple, who first met when Elin joined one of Norman's Wodehouse Walks in 1993. Members are invited to come and meet them both at Savage Club evenings and other Society events.

### *Book Now for THAT Concert*

In the September issue of *Wooster Sauce* it was stated that arrangements were being finalised for a concert to launch the Sylvia McNair/Hal Cazalet CD *The Land Where The Good Songs Go*.

We confirm that this will be going ahead at the Wigmore Hall on Saturday 1st December, and members are strongly urged to join the audience for what will be a superb occasion. Tickets can be obtained from the Wigmore Hall Box Office, tel: 0207 935 2141.



# Christmas Presents

by P Brooke-Haven

With the advent of Christmas a new spirit seems, every year, to steal over the community, a spirit of cheerfulness and goodwill. Minor employees of hotels, restaurants, and other nests of pirates smile oilily at our approach. Our relatives out West write us long, chatty letters about the dear old life in the far-off home town, and speculate round the fireside of an evening as to how much we are good for and whether they were really wise in handicapping the eldest son with our Christian name on the off-chance of our unloosening a bit from time to time.

Our friends greet us in the street with "Well! Christmas will soon be here!" registering the while a mental vow that, until they know what sort of a present we are going to give them, they are hanged if they are going to go above a dollar-ten for us. Everywhere you see it, this genial, Dickensy, hearty, peace-and-good-will-and-all-that-sort-of-thing spirit. Holly hangs on the walls

Happy days! Happy days!

In these circumstances, it behooves us to be prepared. It is useless to imagine, as everyone has done in his more optimistic moods, that the family circle will accept regrets and stories of parcels gone wrong in the post. You worked that, if you remember, in 1905, and it is not a thing that goes well twice. No, presents must be bought, and the only thing to do is to try to get off as lightly as possible.

The first rule in buying Christmas presents is to select something shiny. If the object chosen is of leather, the leather must look as if it had just been well greased: if of silver, it must gleam with that light which, as the poet so well says, never was on sea or land. Books are very popular for that reason. There is probably nothing in existence which can look so shiny as a collected works of Longfellow, Tennyson, or Wordsworth.

I have seen a common house-fly alight on the back of a Christmas edition of Rabindranath Tagore which I had given to my Uncle James and slide the whole length of the volume, eventually shooting off with incredible velocity and stunning itself against the wall. Many smart people, indeed, strew their drawing-rooms with books which have been wished on them in the merry season of Yule for no other reason than to encompass the dissolution of such flies as may have escaped the swatting of the lower servants told off for that purpose.

They may also be used as mirrors.

My only objection to the custom of giving books as Christmas presents is perhaps the selfish one that it encourages and keeps in the game a number of writers who would be far better employed if they abandoned the pen and took to work.

Publishers rely on the festive season to help them to get rid of all these bulky volumes which they have published at intervals during the past twelve months to oblige their wives' relations.

A more judicious spirit of giving on the part of the public would kill almost entirely the sale of such works as *Travels Among the Lesser-Known Haunts of the Siberian Eel-Vulture*, *Forgotten Walks Through Old Hoboken*, *Bird-Life on the Lower Mississippi*, and the like.

Humaneness and consideration for others are the two virtues which every buyer of Christmas presents should possess. His ideal should be to select something which shall be capable of being passed on to somebody else either next Christmas or when some hold-up man who happens to be a friend of the victim announces that he is about to marry. Much misery has been caused in an infinite number of homes by the practice of giving presents which cannot be treated in this way. I recollect handing on to a friend who was contemplating laying the foundations of a future divorce, by espousing some girl whose name at the moment escapes me, a singularly repellent claret-jug, presented to me at Christmas by my Aunt Charlotte, which, unknown to me, bore the inscription "With fondest love from CBH." The discovery of this among the wedding-gifts and my friend's total inability to explain who the fondly-loving CBH was, gave the bride an advantage from which her lord and master never recovered, and it was only when, at the end of their first year of wedlock, the courts separated the happy pair that he found himself once more happily in possession of a latch-key.

How different a present was that Smoker's Ideal Companion which I received on Christmas, 1903. It was given to me by the wife of an old college friend, and it had everything, including a brass cigar-cutter, which makes smoking a loathsome impossibility to the rightly-constituted man. I hesitate, for I am not quite sure of my facts, to make such an accusation, but I rather think the beastly thing included a velvet



*P Brooke-Haven was just one name used by P G Wodehouse for his contributions to the American magazine Vanity Fair from 1914 to 1923. This was one of his four articles in December 1915.*

smoking-cap. I gave it away in the Autumn of 1904 to another old college friend as a wedding-present, and thought no more of it. What was my surprise, on Christmas morning, 1908, to receive it back from a distant cousin. I gave it away once again, Christmas 1909, only to unpack it in my home on Christmas morning, 1914, – this time as the gift of my old friend's wife who had first given it to me in 1903.

The thing had completed the full circle, and looked as good as new, though it contained no smoking-cap. It may be that it never had contained a smoking-cap, or possibly the passage of time wrought more heavily on the velvet than on the brass. I confess to a not unmanly wave of sentiment when I beheld it once more and thought of all the good men whom it had enabled to give a handsome and desirable Christmas gift without that expenditure which in these days of the high cost of living it is always so pleasant to avoid.

In a month from now it will be starting out on its travels again, but on a different route, for I am sending it to a friend in Australia, whither, I feel sure, it has never yet penetrated.

The question, "What becomes of the Christmas presents?", is one which has long vexed thinking men. Every year a tidal wave of incredibly useless junk bursts upon the metropolis, and somehow or other it is disposed of long before the first mosquito steps down to the New Jersey shore and hails the Twenty-third Street ferry. A proportion of this, no doubt, is kept working after the manner of my Smoker's Ideal Companion; but the vast majority of Christmas presents simply disappear. My own theory is that they are sold back to the shops whence they emerge next year in another incarnation.

It is a known fact, I believe, that every large store in a big city retains a special staff of skilled workmen whose sole duty it is to transform old Christmas presents into new Christmas presents of a different species. They are like clever cooks who can turn anything into anything. They receive the combined pocket-book, cigar-case, and handy manicure-set, and, with a few deft touches, transform it into the purse with an attachment for milking cows which is to be all the rage in the following season. They take the slightly soiled set of Shakespeare and give it a nice shiny coat of varnish.

If I had only known in time of their existence, I could no doubt, for a small consideration, have got them to make over my aunt Charlotte's claret-jug into a pair of tango-slippers or something. On no other theory is the total disappearance of last year's Christmas presents to be explained. Matter cannot be destroyed: it can only be transformed.

The burden of Christmas-present giving has of late years been grievously increased by the growing sophistication of the modern child. In the good old days it was possible to give a child practically anything, and receive in return a gratitude which has now gone completely out of fashion.

I can still recall thanking with warmth and genuine sincerity an uncle whose annual gift to me consisted of a small box of candy and an orange.

But for the modern child you have got to do better than that. You have got to dig down a bit. You have got to strip off a few from the roll.

The modern child has no illusions. You can't hand him anything about Santa Claus. He has got your number.

The modern child wakes on Christmas morning – a little late, for he was fox-trotting into the small hours – and rings languidly for Wilberforce, his man, to unwrap the presents. He sneers at the silver cigarette-case from Uncle Paul, and gives it to Wilberforce. He exhibits a little excitement at the announcement that Aunt Matilda has given him a new automobile, but relapses into a moody gloom when he hears what make it is, for people are no longer buying that sort of car. It is only when dear old grandpapa is discovered to have presented him with a block of Bethlehem Steel that he becomes really cheerful. He instructs Wilberforce to get his broker on the 'phone first thing when the exchange re-opens. He also asks Wilberforce to call up grandpapa and thank him.

Wilberforce then tactfully withdraws. The youth lights a cigarette and leans back wearily on the pillows.

I love the old carols of Yuletide. One hears them all too little nowadays. How full they were of the spirit of optimism and consolation. That one about "Christmas Comes But Once a Year!" . . . That is my favorite, I think.



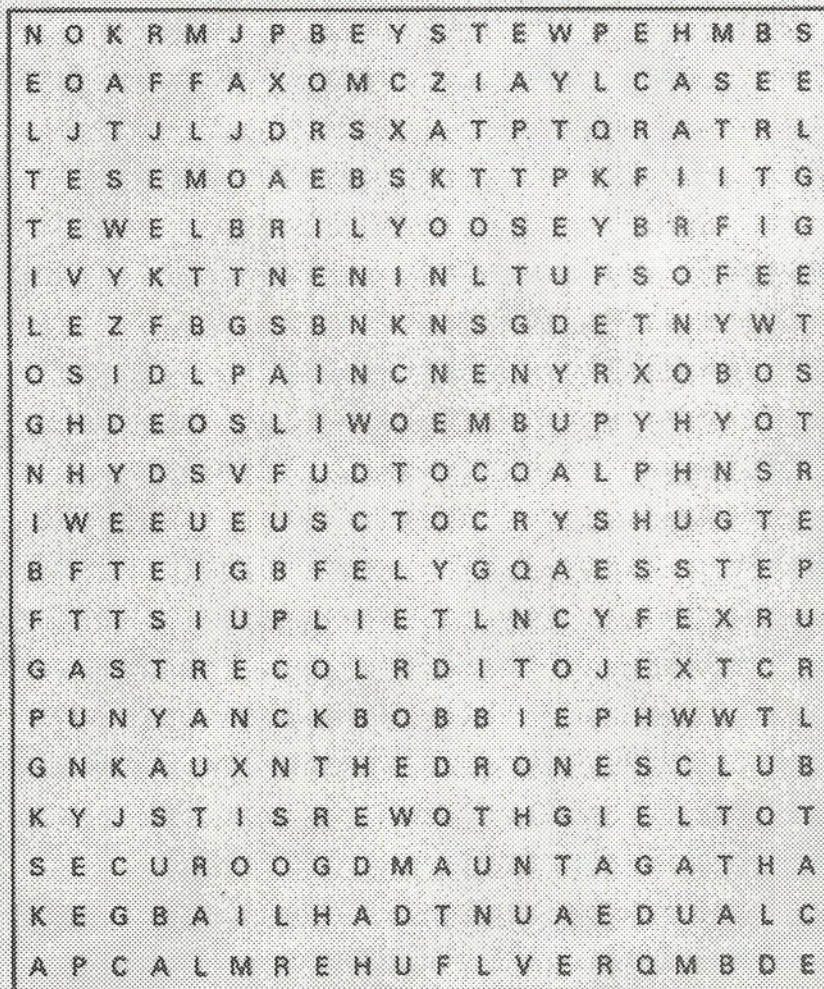
# Something a Little Different

Many people enjoy the occasional puzzle, especially at holiday time. British European Associated Publishers produce monthly magazines such as Puzzle Compendium, and have kindly permitted us to reproduce two examples from issue 111.

## WORDSEARCH 1

'I turned to Aunt Agatha, whose demeanour was now rather like that of one who, picking daisies on the railway, has just caught the down express in the small of the back.' This puzzle looks at the creations of that master manipulator of the English language, Pelham Grenville Wodehouse.

Anatole  
Aunt Agatha  
Aunt Dahlia  
Barmy  
Bertie Wooster  
Bingley  
Bingo Little  
Bobbie  
Brinkley Court  
Claude  
Eustace  
Florence Craye  
Gussie Fink-Nottle  
Honorina  
Jeeves  
Madeline Bassett  
Market Snodsbury  
Pongo Twistleton  
Rupert Steggles  
Sippy  
Spode  
Stiffy Byng  
The Drones Club  
Totleigh Towers  
Tuppy Glossop  
Uncle Tom  
Watkyn Bassett






# The Australian Society publishes Plum Pudding

A valiant attempt is being made to launch 'The PG Wodehouse Society of Australia'. With support from Golden Days Radio in Melbourne, whose presenters helped promote the fledgling Society, a small band of Wodehouseans have produced the first issue of their newsletter, *Plum Pudding*.

In a country as vast in size as Australia, with very sparse population outside the major cities, it is a most ambitious project, and any support, either financial or personal, which can be given would be well received. The first issue, edited by Paulette Smythe, had articles by Irene Coates, Don Cooper, Arthur Marsh and Charles Stone-Tolcher, and Sal Cooper provided the illustrations.

Irene Coates's article drew attention to a number of PGW's references to Agatha Christie, taken from eight books from 1955 to 1974. Charles Stone-Tolcher's article is similar to the one on page 6 of this issue. Arthur Marsh (see page 24, *Editor's Tailpieces*) provided a page of reminiscences, and Don Cooper set out eight favourite misquotations by Bertie Wooster as character or narrator.



## LETTER BOXES

Arrange each group of letters in its respective box in the grid.  
We've given you a start – see if you can unravel a quotation from P.G. Wodehouse.

1A	AEHITTT
1B	IILLSTT
1C	EGHNNOR
1D	<del>AEEMSTU</del>
2A	AENNRST
2B	AABDDG
2C	ADOOTTU
2D	AEHNSTU
3A	CEORRS
3B	AELLNOO
3C	AEHLRT
3D	AEIKORY
4A	AELNOPST
4B	EHHOORT
4C	CEFOU
4D	LOPTV

	A	B	C	D
1				USE
				ME
				EA
2				
3				
4				



# Collecting the Wodehouse

*Charles Stone-Tolcher mulls over the particular problems faced by a Wodehouse collector Down Under*

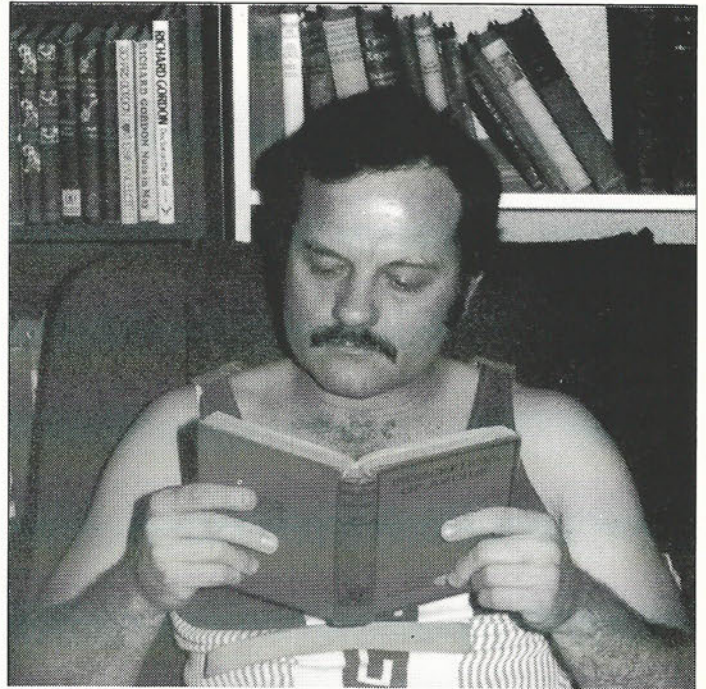
As an avid book collector I am very proud of the fact that I have every book that Wodehouse wrote. I first 'met' Plum some 15 years ago when a then work colleague, who knew of my passion for books, said to me: "Why don't you collect Wodehouse? He's very good, you know". "Right ho" says I, and beetled off to the bookshop he suggested and purchased my first Wodehouse, a first edition of *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*. The book was ex-library stock and some foul blot had glued down the dust jacket. (I wonder why people do this. I have several books where this has been done). Anyway, I was enchanted with the book. Of course I had heard of Wodehouse before, having watched the *Wodehouse Playhouse* TV series in the 1970s but I had never thought about reading the books till then.

Well anyway I was smitten by the cove and promptly returned to the same shop and purchased some more books. Over a period of several months I returned to the store at least once a week to buy his stock. Although there are many second-hand bookshops in Brisbane this particular one was very cheap. I only paid \$15 for that first book.

The chappie who owned the store became quite peeved with me because he had several regular customers who also wanted Wodehouse and I was snapping them up before the others had a chance to get at them. It got to a stage where the owner would take the books off the shelf whenever he saw me coming (true story). He retired soon after (I do not think that I am responsible for this and I am sure it is just a coincidence) and the business was sold. After this the shop lost all its appeal to me and I started to search elsewhere for books.

A great place to buy books in Brisbane is at the Lifeline charity bookfest (two per year) and the biannual University of Queensland Alumni sale. Here you can buy books from as little as \$2. For example I paid only \$5 for an as new copy of *The World of Ukridge* with its dust jacket. With prices like this you can well understand why most of my Wodehouse collection was purchased from these sales.

However, if anyone reading this thinks that these sales are fun, then that person is an ass because they can be hell. Literally hundreds of people turn up on opening day and the push can be quite scary. In fact



*Charles Stone-Tolcher, relaxing with a new acquisition – in 1988*

it is wise to arrive at least two hours before the doors open to get a good position. The thrill of the chase is prevalent as book hunters with sweat on their brows and veins between their teeth barge and shove their way around the tables.

One day whilst in the city area I dropped into one of the second-hand book stores to see what was 'new' when the owner, who knew I collected Wodehouse, advised that he had some books that he thought I may be interested in.. You can imagine my delight when he produced such rarities as *The Prince and Betty* (UK version) and *Louder and Funnier*. What was more he let me have them for \$12 each. OK, so the covers were not the best but the text was fine. I was in heaven. Although *The Prince* is not one of Plum's best, it is like gold to a collector like me.

My first introduction to the school stories was the book *The Pothunters*. I purchased this book in a small town about 100 kilometres north of Brisbane. The edition is dated 1902 and features two runners on the front cover and a boxer on the spine. There is no advertising supplement in the book so therefore I believe it is a genuine 1902 printing and not the 1915 printing (see the article by Nick Townsend in the June 2000 edition of *Wooster Sauce* regarding



## Letters to the Editor

*From Louise O'Connor of Richmond*

I was interested to read in the September *Wooster Sauce* that Wendy-Irene Grimm didn't recognise the allusion to Sir Percy Blakeney in *The Code of the Woosters*. I suppose the Scarlet Pimpernel novels are not much read nowadays. I read them avidly when I was a child, and had a crush for some time on Percy Blakeney. When I came to read the Psmith books when I was about twelve, I at once recognised Psmith as a modern Pimpernel, his languid, foppish demeanour masking the steely man of action underneath.

Interesting also to see that Bernard Cornwell is a Jeeves fan. Although I agree that the Flashman novels are funny, I think there is too much horror in them to be compared as humorous writing to the Jeeves books. It would be interesting to have Flashman

and Jeeves meet, though. Jeeves as a young man could have met Flashman when he was very old. After all, Flashman in the latest volume of his adventures met that pompous ass Sherlock Holmes. I'm sure George Macdonald Fraser could pull it off.

*From Dr Linda Tyler*

I met my husband-to-be in Surrey. Some months later, after he had proposed to me, he told me he was hooked from the moment I said I was from South Norwood. A Wodehouse fan from his teenage years, he remembered Aunt Agatha discussing with Bertie Uncle George's intention of marrying "some impossible girl from South Norwood" (*Indian Summer of an Uncle* from *Very Good, Jeeves*).

Admittedly, she was in fact from East Dulwich, but my husband was prepared to overlook this.

## Collecting the Wodehouse, continued

this debate). Anyway, I most certainly do not have the first printing. From memory I paid about \$20 for it and this makes me laugh when I see some of the prices being asked for this edition over the internet today.

By 1999 I had almost a full collection of Wodehouse with the exception of several books that are extremely scarce in Australia, these being:

*The Globe by the Way Book*

*My Man Jeeves*

*Not George Washington*

*Plum Pie*

*The Swoop*

*William Tell Told Again*

I never would have believed at the time that I would have been able to get these treasures. I was not even aware that books like "The Swoop", "Not George Washington", or "William Tell" had been reprinted in the US in the late 70s and early 80s so I was absolutely delighted (thanks to going on the internet) to get hold of them.

In fact it was from a fellow-enthusiast at the website [alt.fan.wodehouse](http://alt.fan.wodehouse) that I learned that *William Tell*, minus the graphics of the original, had been reprinted in a little volume entitled *The Eighteen-Carat Kid and Other Stories*. I managed to get this book through Amazon out of print book search. My copy of *The Globe By The Way Book* is a facsimile

edition that was printed in 1985 by Heineman/Spectre Press and limited to 500 copies only. This means that the book is still quite rare and it remains the most expensive Wodehouse I own. My copy of *My Man Jeeves* was printed by George Newnes and is undated.

The internet has also led me to some hitherto unknown Wodehouse (unknown to me anyway). These include *The Luck Stone*; *Tales of Wrykyn and Elsewhere*; *A Man of Means*; *Wodehouse at the Wicket* and *The Parrot and Other Poems*.

Now that I have all the books, numerous omnibuses and anthologies, plus several biographies, where do I go from here? Some of you may think that the thrill of the chase has gone. No more will that Stone-Tolcher chappie go potty, drool at the mouth and dance around the room singing *Rule Britannia* when he picks up a Wodehouse. This type of thinking is unfounded because I can always search for better copies to replace the books I already own. I also intend to buy the soundtracks for some of the Wodehouse/Bolton musicals such as *Sitting Pretty* and *Leave it to Jane*, not to mention some of the audio books.

Well there you have it. No three pipe problems or shady deals after dark. No help required from Jeeves, Gally or even Percy Pilbeam. I have come by my collection by sheer good luck and being in the right place at the right time. As I said, the search goes on.



# My First Wodehouse Experience

Jonathan Bacchus remembers life in a bedsit

In 1972 I was twenty-one, employed as a junior cog in a large Insurance Company machine, and living in a Pimlico bedsit so small that only an unusually short-tailed cat could have been swung in it.

At that time I knew the name of P G Wodehouse only vaguely, as the creator of Bertie Wooster and Jeeves, whom I had seen portrayed on TV by Ian Carmichael and Dennis Price. Then, for my twenty-first birthday, I was given the *World of Jeeves* omnibus (90th birthday edition) which contained thirty-four Jeeves short stories. As I read them I realised that not even the best of adaptations – and the Carmichael-Price ones, if memory serves, were pretty good – could hope to do anything like full justice to the text.

For Wodehouse's genius, surely, lies not only in his masterful creation of comic characters and situations, but also in his matchless ability to exploit the comic potential of the English language itself. The precise pairing of adjective with noun and adverb with verb, the phrase skilfully turned for maximum humorous effect, the lunatic imagery that would have occurred to nobody but Wodehouse . . . the best words in the best order, as the fellow said. I was entranced.

No sooner had I finished *The World of Jeeves* than I was in Foyle's, handing over a hard-earned £2.50 for *The World of Mr Mulliner* (new and enlarged edition). And it was with the forty-two Mulliner stories that I felt I had struck gold: that this was nothing less than Wodehouse at his incomparable best. It is a view clearly shared by The Master himself, for in his *Preface* to the Mulliner omnibus he writes (paraphrasing Oliver Wendell Holmes):

I must warn my public that in *The World of Mr Mulliner* I am writing as funny as I can, and I can only hope that there will be no ill results.

Wodehouse concludes the Preface by recommending 'not more than two or perhaps three stories a day' as the medium dose for an adult. In fact, I rationed myself to one per night. Every evening I would walk home from my office in St James's to my little room in Tachbrook Street, eat my frugal meal, light the tiny gas-fire, settle myself in my favourite – indeed, the only – chair, take two digestive biscuits from their tin and start the evening's Mulliner story. At the office, when I ought to have been concentrating on pension scheme documentation, I would often find myself thinking about Archibald Mulliner's

imitation of a hen laying an egg, or Charlotte Mulliner's *Vignette in Verse* on gnu-hunting.

That was getting on for thirty years ago, and in the intervening decades I have made many a foray into the golden chronicles of Wooster, Emsworth, Ukridge and others, but for me the Mulliner stories together represent a peak of brilliance that Wodehouse never quite attains elsewhere.

Their settings are pleasingly divided between London, rural England and America. The Drones Club and Bobbie Wickham provide satisfying links with other parts of Wodehouseland. One story, *The Man Who Gave up Smoking*, contains what is, I think, my favourite sentence in all Wodehouse:

After all, as she reasoned with not a little shrewd sense, a gibbering artist is just as good as a sane artist, provided he makes no charge for painting portraits.

And several stories, making what must be easily the funniest ever use of quotation from the King James Bible, describe the startling effects of an accidental overdose of Mulliner's Buck-U-Uppo upon normally sedate clergymen:

"I'll bet you two chasubles to a hassock that you don't feel as fine as I do," said the Bishop. "It must be something in the air of this place. I haven't felt like this since Boat Race Night of the year 1893. Wow!" he continued. "Whoopee! How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! Numbers, 44, 5."

And *Came the Dawn* includes an exchange that would feature in my twenty best examples of Wodehouse dialogue:

"You would allow this man to buy you with his gold?"

"Don't overlook his diamonds."

My bedsit days are now long in the past, but still from time to time I take down *The World of Mr Mulliner* and re-read a story or two, encountering the occasional twenty-nine-year-old digestive biscuit crumb inextricably embedded in the binding. There are stories that I must by now have read half a dozen times, yet they still make me shake with laughter: this is twentieth-century English literature's foremost humorist writing as funny as he can.



# A Sauce of Misquotation

Clarified by Nigel Rees

I have recently drawn up a list of the most frequent quotations (or rather allusions to same) in the Wodehouse books that I have read – and this includes most of the obvious titles. So, let's start the Top Ten with what is, without doubt, PGW's favourite literary reference. He's always on about it:

1 'When you began to administer those . . . half-scissor hooks to the body, why, then I felt like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken; or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes he stared at the Pacific.' – *Psmith Journalist*

2 'That is the problem which is torturing me, Jeeves. I can't make up my mind. You remember that fellow you've mentioned to me once or twice, who let something wait upon something? You know who I mean – the cat chap.' – *The Code of the Woosters*

3 'Do you recall telling me once about someone who told somebody he could tell him something which would make him think a bit? Knitted socks and porcupines entered into it, I remember.' – *Jeeves in the Offing*

4 'Jeeves . . . when urged to do so by this blighted Bassett would stop his ears like the deaf adder, which, as you probably know, made a point of refusing to hear the voice of the charmer.' – *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves*

5 'When I told Gussie about this telegram, urging upon him that now was the time for all good men to

come to the aid of the party, he merely as I say, stuck his ears back.' – *The Mating Season*

6 'Miss Halliday . . . is a very old and valued friend of mine. We two have, so to speak, pulled the gowans fine.' – *Leave It To Psmith*

7 'He says there has been a rift within the lute . . . You and Stilton. According to Percy, the lute is not the lute it was. Stilton has broken the engagement.' – *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*

8 'One false step and he'll swoop on me like the – who was it who came down like a wolf on the fold?' – *Joy In the Morning*

9 'The snail's on the wing and the lark's on the thorn, or rather the other way round, as I've sometimes heard you say.' – *Much Obligated, Jeeves*

10 'He greets you as if you were a favourite son, starts agitating the cocktail shaker before you know where you are, slips a couple into you with a merry laugh, claps you on the back, tells you a dialect story about two Irishmen named Pat and Mike, and, in a word, makes life one grand, sweet song.' – *Thank You, Jeeves*

The original sources can be found on page 21, but see if you can identify them first.

In the next issue, I will reveal the sources of some of PGW's more obscure references.

## Dennis Greenland reports on the First Society Meeting in Coventry

A total of thirteen members attended the Midlands meeting in Coventry on 29 September. Dennis Greenland welcomed members, each of whom in turn introduced themselves and explained how they came to discover the works of the Master. After listening to a few tracks from the Cazalet/McNair CD, and enjoying a cup of strengthening Bohea, members read out some of their favourite extracts from the books. Much lively discussion ensued, mostly straying off the subject.

Michael Bird brought along a couple of cow creamers which he used to explain how to recognise the

traditional form from that which Aunt Dahlia would sneeringly refer to as modern Dutch. Ken Krober produced a copy of the video *3 Golf Films*, made from old silent films of PGW's stories, and everyone snorted appreciatively in all the right places. Once we had been given a teach-in on the operation of the particular model of VCR, it was very easy on the eye.

Unfortunately, some had to leave early to catch trains, but it was a pleasant afternoon, and various suggestions were put forward as to the format of a further meeting. Hopefully arrangements can be made for another get-together next summer.



# Men Call It Love and Candlelight

Brian Taves reviews some more films which involved Wodehouse

An early project on which Wodehouse was asked to work during his first spell with MGM was *Men Call It Love*, a 'pre-code' film made at a time when Hollywood could depict marital infidelity more frankly than would be the case only a very few years later.

Probably Wodehouse was assigned to this film because it dealt with the philandering *mores* of a golf champion, whose female partners, always married women, were also his lovers. Wodehouse's attempts to turn it into comedy-drama were thwarted, however, and he received no credit for the final film, which was purely dramatic, without any attempt at humour.

But perhaps he learned some lessons for his next project. In 1929, MGM had bought the rights to *Candle-Light*, which Wodehouse had successfully adapted from Siegfried Geyer's original play that same year. The plot of *Candle-Light* defies all the conventions associated with Wodehouse, for it is very continental in outlook. There are several attempts at seduction, most notably by the valet, Josef, who believes Marie is a titled, married woman, a type which has always held a secret appeal for him.

Josef impersonates his employer, Prince Rudolf Haseldorf-Schlobitten, for Marie's benefit, and when Rudolf unexpectedly returns home early, he sympathetically tries to help Rudolf by pretending to be him. Marie secretly reveals to Rudolf that she is in fact only Mitzie, the maid of Baroness von Rischenheim, who is also married and is secretly being courted by Rudolf.

Marie, assuming social affinity with Rudolf, makes a play for his affections, which he is on the verge of accepting twice despite his assurances to Josef that he respects his servant's clear affection for her.

The only aspect of *Candle-Light* which is typical of Wodehouse is the mixture of classes, with master and servant each becoming involved in the affairs of the other. There is a moral at the end, with Rudolf saying:

"Take it from me, Josef, if a woman is the right woman, her rank doesn't matter a hang."

but this is the film's *only* moral. The title is reputedly derived from the old maxim:

"Choose neither women nor linen by candle-light."

By March 1931, still working on *Candle-Light*, Wodehouse doubted his contract would be renewed.

Copy of program of the first performance of "CANDLE-LIGHT" as produced at The Empire Theatre, New York:

GILBERT MILLER

Presents

Gertrude Lawrence in

"CANDLE-LIGHT"

A Comedy in Three Acts

By SIEGFRIED GEYER

Adapted by P. G. Wodehouse

## CHARACTERS

PRINCE RUDOLF HASELDORF-SCHLOBITTEN—

Reginald Owen

JOSEF, his valet ..... Leslie Howard

BARON VON RISCHENHEIM ..... Robert English

BARONESS VON RISCHENHEIM ..... Betty Schuster

LISERL ..... Rita Vale

MARIE ..... Gertrude Lawrence

A WAITER ..... Ralph Roberts

KOEPFKE, a chauffeur ..... Jack Carlton

The action takes place between seven and ten o'clock of an evening in December, in PRINCE RUDOLF'S apartment.

TIME: The Present.

The cast from the stage production of *Candle-Light* starring Gertrude Lawrence as Marie-Mitzie

He wrote to William Townend:

"My only hope is that I have made myself so pleasant to everyone here that by now I may count as a relative. The studio is full of relatives of the big bosses who do no work and draw enormous salaries."

The fate of *Candle-Light* was adapted by Wodehouse in one of his Hollywood Mulliner stories, *The Castaways* (collected in *Blandings Castle and Elsewhere*). MGM traded Universal their rights in it in return for those in Rider Haggard's *She*. Universal then discovered that they didn't own the rights to *She* and had to pay cash for *Candle-Light* after all. They made the film in a month in 1933, one of the last years in which it could have appeared on the screen, for its lack of sexual morality would have been discouraged or banned outright by the forthcoming code of self-censorship.



## Perhaps A B Filmer's Swan Just Had a Bad Day

James P Robinson spotted a news report in an American daily on May 26th, 2001

### Woman Battered by Swan Loses Injury Claim

A woman whose wrist was broken after a swan knocked her to the ground and battered her in a Dublin park has lost a \$32,600 injury action against the state, Irish newspapers said Friday.

Mary Ryan, 71, told a Dublin court that on the day of the attack she had just fed the swan – a resident of the central Phoenix Park for the past nine years – and was walking away when she heard a heavy flapping of wings.

“When I turned around I couldn’t believe what I was seeing,” she said. “He was coming for me and started beating me on the legs with his wings. He knocked me to the ground . . . and tried to peck my head.”

Ryan, who managed to escape after a passing motorist distracted the swan by sounding his horn, said her wrist had been disfigured and she still suffered back pain as a result of the incident, reports said.

Ryan said park commissioners should have put up signs warning the public about “the mischievous propensity and uncertain temperament” of swans.

However, Judge Kevin Haugh ruled that no negligence had been established against the park authorities, who could not be held responsible for a swan that had flown on to their land.

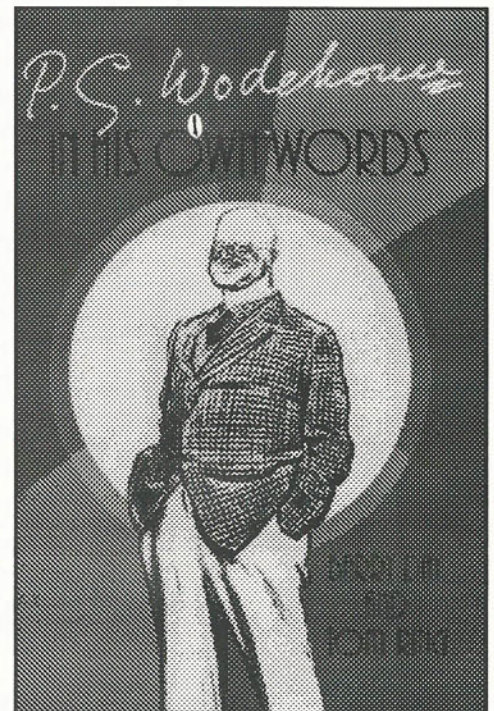
He said he was satisfied that swans were not given to menacing behavior but accepted that this particular one had been having “a very bad day.”

## In His Own Words

*In His Own Words* is a new book published in hard covers by Hutchinson on November 1st. (ISBN: 0 09 179399 8; £12.99).

It represents a collection of P G Wodehouse’s thoughts on many aspects of his life and the world at large, which have been sifted, as the title suggests, from his own writings. The sources used by compilers Barry Day (who has previously written of Oscar Wilde, Noel Coward and the Globe Theatre, and is presently working on a book about Dorothy Parker) and Tony Ring include PGW’s fiction, plays, lyrics, journalism and letters, and the whole confection of 300 pages is tied together by brief snatches of linking narrative.

Many of the classic Wodehouse nifties are included, but most readers will find material with which they are not familiar, and unexpected comments which help to provide a more complete picture of Wodehouse, the man.



### I SAY!

#### Favourite Exchanges – 20

“Oh, Joe,” said Sally, “I’ve made the most awful fool of myself. I’m the world’s worst half-wit.”

Joe frowned.

“You are speaking of the woman I love.” he said stiffly.

From *Bachelors Anonymous*, 1973

### The Smile That Wins

#### Favourite Nifties – 17

His face, which in repose resembled a slab of granite with suspicious eyes, was softened now by a genial smile. He had not actually parked his gun in the cloakroom but he had the air of a man who had done so.

From *Hot Water*, 1932



# Manifestly Wodehouse

by Cyril P Hershon

There recently fell into my hands a curiosity which turned out to be a treasure; it was none other than a ship's manifest for 1926 and on the centre page (unnumbered) was the name 'Wodehouse, Mr PG' among the alphabetical list of first-class passengers. The reasons for Plum's being aboard are well known but here we also have an anomaly.

David Jasen writes (in *A Portrait of a Master*, Garnstone Press, 1975, at p104):

Towards the end of July 1926, Plum received a cable from Guy Bolton urging him to make his way to the States and help with the writing of a musical comedy called, *Oh, Kay!*.

We should guess that the cable arrived at the end of *June*, for PG set sail from Southampton on Thursday, 8th July at 10.30 in the morning, for New York, via Cherbourg. The *Majestic*, some 56,551 tons and quadruple screw, was billed as the largest steamer in the world, and Plum will have shown no superstition in that, by taking a ship of the White Star Line, he was following the course and company of the ill-fated *Titanic*. Another irony, the ship, originally the *Bismark*, had been handed over to the Allies as part of the reparation settlement at the end of the Great War. It was also serving the Royal and US Mails. Commanded by GR Metcalfe (Lt Commander, RNR, retired), it carried a surgeon and assistant surgeon and the restaurant manager was one M. Bocasso.

Clearly PG Wodehouse spared no expense, for the ship had de luxe facilities, mostly reserved for

first-class passengers. These included barber, lady hairdresser and lady manicurist, electric baths, gymnasium, clothes pressing, marconigraphs and, useful for a writer, the services of an experienced stenographer.

Would Plum have availed himself of the first class lounges to hear the 'orchestra of skilled musicians' or heeded the warning that 'certain persons, believed to be professional gamblers, are in the habit of travelling to and fro in Atlantic Steamships'? The back page of this manifest includes a map and a sort of log on which a passenger has charted the daily progress of the *Majestic* in ink.

Frankly, the number of general facilities – even if you did have to pay for some – makes present-day travel seem spartan by comparison. After a five-day journey, the boat was ready to turn round for the return journey some four days later.

Met presumably by Guy Bolton, he was to spend a hot summer – he claimed he lost one whole stone in the heat – writing at Bolton's home in Great Neck. *Oh, Kay!* opened in Philadelphia in November of that year and, with Gertrude Lawrence and Oscar Shaw, not to mention the music and lyrics of George and Ira Gershwin, was a resounding success. The critic of the *New York Daily News*, Burns Mantle, wrote:

The book of *Oh, Kay!* was written by Guy Bolton and PG Wodehouse, than whom there are no better librettists writing for our stage.

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## A Message from Our Printers

We are delighted to have been associated with the production of *Wooster Sauce* in recent years and wish to convey our congratulations for completing five years of quarterly issues.

Whilst much of our time is consumed with publications covering incidental issues such as the health of the nation, the development of our education system and world travel markets, it is a pleasure to be involved with a work that indulges in such humour. Unfortunately, this does mean that our staff spend more time reading the newsletter than actually printing it, but at least this will provide an excuse should we ever be late for delivery.

We were kindly given this opportunity to promote our services, which seemed too good an offer to refuse. If you have any requirements of a design or print nature, we would be most pleased to hear from you.

**BAINES design and print**



# Other Lands Where The Good Songs Went

Wodehouse lyrics on other CDs, reviewed by Eddie Grabham

The sheer delight of hearing Hal Cazalet and Sylvia McNair (not to mention Lara Cazalet) singing Plum's lyrics makes one yearn for more. Members will no doubt be familiar with one or other of the recordings of the 1959 revival of *Leave It To Jane* and the magnificent John McGlenn re-creation of *Sitting Pretty* recorded in 1989, both of which capture the wit and charm of the PGW lyrics.

As these and all the other shows were first seen in the nineteen-tens and -twenties, more recent recordings don't necessarily indicate their original sound. I was therefore particularly pleased to stumble upon a couple of recordings – not of the original casts, unfortunately, but of renderings by those 'Light Opera' companies so beloved by early record companies.

From our point of view, *Broadway Through the Gramophone, Volume III (1914-1920)* is the more rewarding. Of the thirty-two shows represented, four come from the legendary team of Bolton, Wodehouse and Kern. The *Have a Heart* (1917) medley from the Victor Light Opera Company (VLO) includes five numbers, none of which are included on the new Cazalet/McNair CD. One song from this show, *Honeymoon Inn*, was interpolated into the 1975 Goodspeed Opera House revival of *Very Good Eddie*. Incidentally, *The Bungalow in Quogue* from *The Riviera Girl* (1917) was also included and, as the 1975 revival (recorded in 1977) is available on CD these songs can also still be enjoyed.

Hal and Sylvia do sing two numbers from *Oh, Boy!* (1917) which make for fascinating comparison with the VLO medley. The very familiar *Till the Clouds Roll By* and the less well-known *An Old-Fashioned Wife* are also included on the 1917 recording.

The *Leave It To Jane* (1917) medley is particularly interesting as it affords comparison with the 1959 version mentioned above. Although six numbers are included, Hal and Sylvia have chosen one that is not, *Sir Galahad*. The other surprising omission from the 1917 medley is *Cleopatterer*, given a very forties interpretation by June Allyson in the Jerome Kern biopic *Till The Clouds Roll By* (1946), which is also available on CD.

The fourth VLO medley also highlights another point of interest. *Oh, Lady! Lady!!* (1918) includes five of the numbers from the original Broadway production, but seen in retrospect, the song dropped 'on the road' is now regarded as Plum's most famous. *Bill*

was eventually resurrected with lyrics revised by Oscar Hammerstein II in *Showboat*, with at least three recorded versions by Helen Morgan available on CD.

What a treat to hear the original lyric sung by Lara Cazalet on the new recording.

*Broadway Through the Gramophone, Volume IV (1920-1929)* includes thirty-two medleys (thirty shows and two early talkies), but only one includes lyrics by Plum. It is still of interest, however, with the music on this occasion composed by Rudolf Friml. PGW shared lyric credits with Clifford Grey for *The Three Musketeers* (1928) and the CD affords an opportunity to savour songs not often heard these days.

The original London cast recording of *Anything Goes* (1935) includes truncated versions of PGW's uncredited anglicised lyrics. All right for period atmosphere, but Sylvia and Hal treat us to full-length versions of *Anything Goes* and *You're the Top*.

There are a number of other CDs with Wodehouse lyrics, of course, but it is always interesting to compare contemporary recordings with modern ones – especially when they are as good as the Cazalet/McNair offering. That represents less than ten per cent of Plum's output as a lyricist – dare we hope for several further recording sessions?

## Brief Discography

- |  |                     |            |
|--|---------------------|------------|
| <i>Very Good, Eddie</i>  | DRG Records         | CDRG 6100  |
| <i>Leave It To Jane</i><br>(Double CD with Oh, Kay)  | STET                | 15017      |
| <i>Leave It To Jane - The Complete Recordings</i>  | AEI-CD038           |            |
| <i>Sitting Pretty</i><br>(Double CD)   | New World Records   | 80387-2    |
| <i>Till the Clouds Roll By</i>   | Sound Track Factory | SFCD 33513 |
| <i>Broadway Through the Gramophone:</i>  |                     |            |
| <i>Volume III, 1914-1920</i>   | Pavilion            | GEMS 0084  |
| <i>Volume IV, 1920-1929</i>  | Pavilion            | GEMS 0085  |
| <i>Cole Porter in London</i><br>(Double LP from 1974)  | EMI World Records   | SHB26      |
| <i>The Land Where The Good Songs Go</i><br>Hal Cazalet and Sylvia McNair (with Lara Cazalet) | Harbinger Records   | HCD1901    |



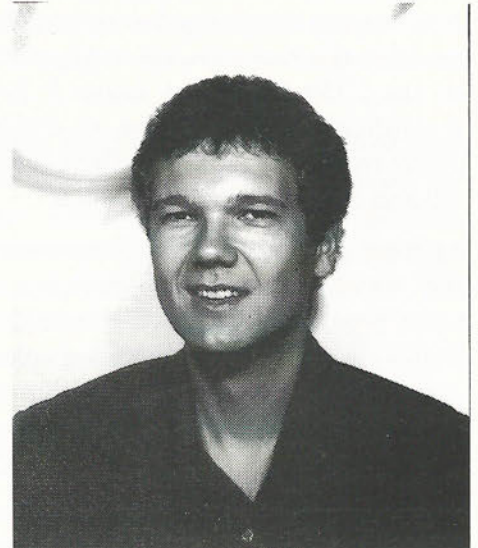
## Swiss 'bücher' award for Quick Service!

### Thomas Schlachter's translation honoured

When Thomas Schlachter joined the Millennium Tour last year, it was secure in the knowledge that he had one translation of a Wodehouse book into German under his belt, and was hard at work on a second. What he did not expect was that *Jetzt oder nie!*, or *Quick Service* as it would be called over here, which was published in Zurich by Edition Epoca, would be honoured as one of the 'best designed Swiss books of the year'. What is more, it was the only fiction title amongst the winners. The awards are conferred in an annual competition organised by the Swiss Federal Office of the Arts and judged by a panel of experienced typographers and other members of the publishing world.

The citation for the award read as follows:

Here the contemporary approach to reading a classic light novel is made visible in its design: traditional (endpaper) and unconventional (cover with embossed printing) elements that are elegantly combined with a touch of poetry and a pinch of humour, give the book an appeal which beautifully harmonises with its contents.



Thomas Schlachter, 36, lives in Zurich and has been a freelance translator for five years. Apart from PG Wodehouse, he primarily translates contemporary fiction into German, including the works of British novelist Gilbert Adair (*Love and Death on Long Island, A Closed Book*). Right now Thomas is at work on his third Wodehouse (and first Jeeves) novel, *Joy in the Morning*, which is due to appear in August 2002.

His second translation, *Onkel Dynamit*, also published by Edition Epoca, has just appeared, and has a similar feel of quality about it. Our members in Germany may be the best judges of the quality of the translations, but as those members who met Thomas last year will confirm, he is about as bilingual as they come.

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## After Whom was Wodehouse Road, Mumbai, Named? asks Harshawardhan Nimkhedkar

Harshawardhan Nimkhedkar, a member from Nagpur, India, raised the following query:

Dr M D David in his book *Bombay: the City of Dreams* has given a brief account of the origin of names in Bombay. According to his study, most of the names were founded by the British and they are named after personalities, communities and even events as in Britain. At least fifteen important roads in Bombay like the Lamington Road, Carnac Road, Arthur Road, Napean Sea Road, Sandhurst Road, Grant Road, Falkland Road, Hornby Road, Reay Road and Wodehouse Road were named after the British Governors of Bombay.

Was this governor (first name Philip) related to our Wodehouse?

Our Chairman, Norman Murphy, has provided the following information:

Sir Armine Wodehouse, 5th baronet, MP, 1714-1777 had three sons:

John, who became the first baron

Philip, prebendary of Norwich, 1745-1811

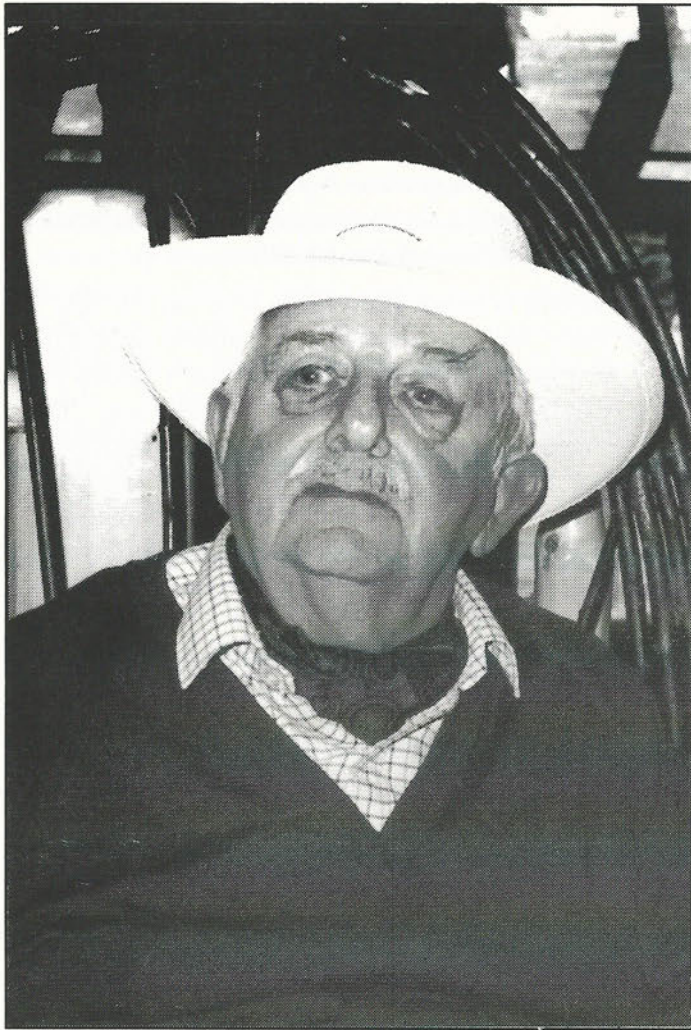
Thomas, a barrister

Philip's eldest son was *Colonel Philip John Wodehouse*, 1788-1846, and the Colonel's fifth son was Henry Ernest Wodehouse, Plum's father.

Thomas's eldest son was *Edmond Wodehouse*, 1784-1855, and Edmond's eldest son was Sir Philip Edmond, 1811-1887, who was Governor of Bombay, 1872-1877.

Therefore, *Colonel Philip* and *Edmond* were first cousins, Henry Ernest and Sir Philip Edmond were second cousins, and Plum was a second cousin, once removed, to the Governor of Bombay.





## PROFILE OF A PATRON

Patrick Wodehouse is the son of Armine Wodehouse, and a nephew of PGW, with whom he spent part of many school vacations. He started an Electrical Engineering Course, (Telecommunications) at Imperial College in 1938, but at the end of the first long vacation, war was declared and all schools and colleges in London were closed down. After a couple of months of the 'Phoney War' they reopened, though with restrictions, and Patrick started his second year. The following June he failed the first part of his examinations and was soon in the RAF, working in Scotland on the Home Radar Chain. After the war, he was able to complete his degree course at Imperial in 1949, and he then took a Post Graduate course with IT&T, for whom he worked for a while. Later Patrick floated his own company, Electronic Measuring and Test Instruments Ltd; which he ran for eight years before becoming involved in projects such as the Tracked Hovercraft and, in Italy, the altitude control of the Tornado Fighter. His final position before retirement was with The European Space Agency at Frascati, also in Italy, and he now lives in Wimbledon Village.

### *A Romano's model for J Sheringham Adair* *The last in the series of notes drawn from Guy Deghy's book* *Paradise in the Strand – the Story of Romano's,* *published by Richards Press, 1958*

One fairly harmless characteristic which, you may recall, P G Wodehouse often gave to his unsuccessful businessmen characters, such as J Sheringham Adair, was a tendency to give the impression of being busier and more important than was actually the case. He would signal this by providing for a multiplicity of telephones on his desk and arranging for him to receive 'planted' messages.

One of the less popular frequenters of Romano's was the artist's agent H J Didcott. After his career was ruined by an unsuccessful law suit for criminal libel which he brought against the Editor of *The Pelican*, Didcott had to retrench and try to rebuild his trade. He sought to keep up appearances by adopting these very same ruses.

Sir Charles Cochran wrote:

In his Haymarket office, he saw to it that callers, particularly small music-hall artistes, should be impressed that he was still a man of power and position. He had an array of bells and speaking-tubes on his desk with different names on them, but all communicated with the office-boy.

Sometimes when talking to a visitor, Didcott would ring through to, perhaps, the 'Continental Representative' and say carelessly "Not there? Oh, I forgot, he went to Paris yesterday with George Edwardes." Then he would resume his business conversation until the carefully instructed boy in the outer office blew through:

"Miss Marie Lloyd to see you, sir."

"Tell Miss Lloyd to wait," Didcott would reply.



## The Three New Faces of By Jeeves

The three new *By Jeeves* events reported on these pages provide an opportunity to consider the broad range of reactions to the show, the Helen Hayes Theatre production of which represents its ninth venue in five years.

The public has enjoyed it. Almost to a man and woman they have been surprised at the nature of the show, not expecting an Andrew Lloyd Webber musical to be intimate, and as a result there are those few who failed to understand the concept. But in reality, it is a show in the spirit of the Princess musical philosophy that Wodehouse did so much to help create, with a plot, a small cast and a restricted number of musicians. The songs follow Jerome Kern's dicta, that they move the plot along and are not mere platforms for what today would presumably be the acts of stand-up comics, soap stars or tired sportsmen.

Two main strands of criticism emanate from members of the Wodehouse community; each is relatively infrequent. The first, an old chestnut, comes from those who accuse the composer of lack of originality. As a non-musician, I do not comment on this, but point out that as PGW was perhaps the greatest self-plagiarist in twentieth century literature, it ill behoves a Wodehousean to complain of the same

factor in another's work. And as four of the songs were in the 1974 musical *Jeeves*, any similarity later songs may have to those means that it is they, not the ones in *By Jeeves*, that are derivative.

The second is heard from those who say the text is not 'pure' Wodehouse. Since it is almost impossible to put pure Wodehouse on stage, such critics are essentially banning theatrical adaptation. The cleverness of Alan Ayckbourn's book and lyrics is the way in which he distilled Wodehouse's plot, language and characters, both directly and obliquely, in a manner similar to that adopted by Plum when he read a good story or heard a worthy anecdote. For example, in the delicious song sung by Honoria Glossop, *That Was Nearly Us*, there is a couplet:

The secret with men of course is  
To treat them a bit like horses

Unwodehousean? Not a bit. See *Bertie Changes His Mind*, in which Jeeves, as narrator, says:

Employers are like horses. They require managing.

So the message is, whether you are able to get to New York, or merely obtain a copy of the video or CD, do as Alan Ayckbourn recommended when interviewed in Scarborough in 1996, and "leave your brain outside". Then you are sure to enjoy it.

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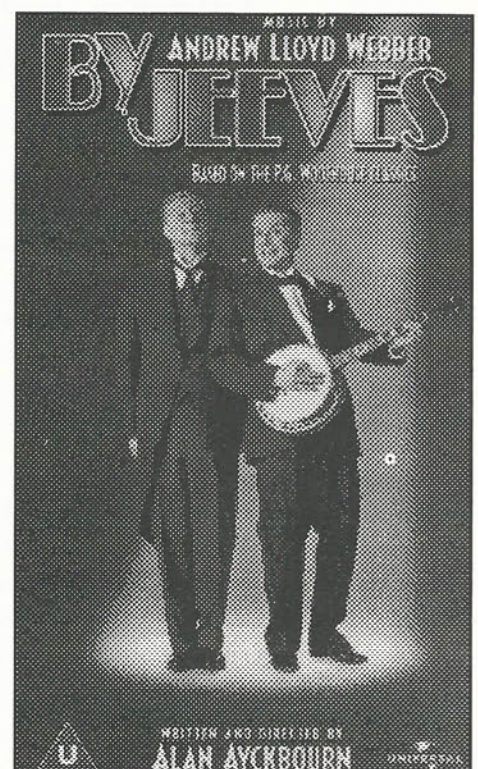
### By Jeeves on Video: the second best option

Members who are not able to hop over to New York to watch the live performance might care to obtain a copy of the video, released on October 29th. This was recorded in Canada shortly after the close of the Pittsburgh production, and used the same cast. (Indeed, only one change, Sir Watkyn Bassett, was made for the New York production.)

The video catches the nature of the musical very well. Evidently the audience had been asked to dress in a particular style to broadly reflect the period, and many shots of them were included in the video. The audience features particularly at the start, and between the acts, as the setting for the piece is established.

Video is a wholly different medium to live theatre, of course, and there were scenes on the video which did not seem to work quite as well as they do on stage. For example, Donna Lynne Champlin (who has the good fortune to resemble a young Pauline Collins) overdoes the coy Honoria at the start of her solo number *That Was Nearly Us*, to the very good song's detriment, and she seemed a little lethargic – not quite startled enough – at the start of *It's a Pig*.

The video represents a useful opportunity to enhance a collection with an item which will help you pass a spare couple of hours very happily. It is now available from video stores (Universal, 9044933) in the UK.





# Broadway Production All Set To Roll

The Helen Hayes Theatre on East 44th Street, adjacent to Broadway, has a capacity of some 550 seats, above the critical 500 which distinguishes a Broadway production from one which is merely 'off-Broadway'. Its *By Jeeves* production, running until February, nearly did not happen, as the American financiers pulled out after the events of September 11th. Fortunately British backers, reported to include Lord Lloyd Webber, Grand Prix team-owner Eddie Jordan and footballer-turned-filmstar Vinnie Jones, filled the void.

As members who have seen the show will know, it requires an intimate setting. The Helen Hayes fits this bill, but I would recommend those going to ask for seats in or behind row F in the stalls. The eyeline of those closer to the stage is only just above, or even below, its floor.

The show's creators, Lord Lloyd Webber and Sir Alan Ayckbourn, are both very fond of the musical. Each was in evidence during the previews, supervising the revisions to the ten minute opening, which resulted in a clearer explanation to the audience of the nature of the entertainment they were about to watch. It is now the third opening which has been tried, and does represent a further improvement.

As an enthusiastic spectator of several productions, I am biased in the show's favour, but can say with utter candour that there is no weak link in this cast. The single most irritating fault in both dialogue and song – only to be expected with a principally American cast – is for the generally admirable attempt at British accents to take a time-out, and for



a clear phrase or two to be pronounced or sung in the local vernacular. Bertie (John Scherer), who is on stage most of the time, inevitably falls into this trap most often.



It is difficult to comment on specific performances in view of the overall high standards, which are particularly gratifying in that for at least two principals and four understudies (who appear on stage in minor roles) the show represents their Broadway debuts. Indeed I would select Becky Watson as the best interpretation of Madeline Bassett I have yet seen. Patron Martin Jarvis's Jeeves is masterly, and just outshines Malcolm Sinclair's original as my favourite Jeeves.

Emily Loesser, who plays Stiffy Byng to perfection in each of singing voice, acting and physical stature, offered the Director a new challenge. Married to Don Stephenson, who played an excellent Bingo Little, she is clearly some months towards producing an Algernon Aubrey of her own, leading to an interesting take on the costume design in the dance song *Love's Maze*. If she should have to retire before the end of the run, she will be hard to replace.

This is a spirited performance which deserves to perform to full houses, and show that the immaculate prose of Wodehouse can inspire a leading playwright and a leading composer to create a production worthy even of a testing audience like Broadway.

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## And a new CD recording as well

Alongside the new production and the first video of *By Jeeves* there is a CD of the American cast from the Pittsburgh production, already available in the USA.

The contents are very similar to the third version of the British CD released in 1997, and of course

the recording predates the new song, *Never Fear*, performed by Bertie and Jeeves, which has replaced *Wooster Will Entertain You* at the start of Act 1.

It is not yet known when the CD (Really Useful group 314 589 309-2) will be available in the UK.



# Philadelphia Hosts a Superb Convention

Robert Bruce reports on the get-together of 150 Wodehouseans

WC Fields remarked on his death bed that 'on the whole I would rather be in Philadelphia'. This is always taken as a doleful remark reflecting somewhat poorly on that city. But Wodehouseans now know better. The biennial convention of The Wodehouse Society was held there in October and was an event of some exuberance, eccentricity and erudition.

Erudition was to the fore on the first evening when the chairman of the UK society, the ever quiet and retiring Norman Murphy, took to adding nuggets of London lore from Georgian times to the architectural tour of the historic old area of Philadelphia led by Herb Moskovitz.

Exuberance took over in the form of an evening at the Anglers' Rest where such concoctions as a Green Swizzle Wooster and a Lizard's Breath or two had already startled the brain cells long before the surprise announcement that Norman Murphy and Elin Woodger, respective heads of the UK and American societies, had taken the old hands of friendship routine so far as to have been secretly married the week before.

Eccentricity took its turn with the cricket match which traditionally graces the Friday morning. This being America the game was not entirely something which Lord's would have recognised as cricket. Tony Ring, as umpire and advisor, tried to instil some of the basics. Bowling styles were more akin to either darts or ten-pin bowling, both surprisingly difficult to score against on a matting wicket. But the sumptuous surroundings of the Merion Cricket Club and the glorious Indian summer weather more than made up. And the cricket tea, taken shortly after midday, was the key factor in The Green Swizzles succumbing to post-prandial torpor and being overcome by the May Queens.

Philadelphia is also the site of the old headquarters of the *Saturday Evening Post* which serialised many of Wodehouse's finest. The building still stands and is honoured with appropriate plaques. It also formed the centrepiece of the first of the erudite contributions to the Convention's proceedings on Saturday. John Graham's researches showed that between 1915 and 1945 half the novels Wodehouse published were first serialised in the *Post*. And you could see why when he pointed out that at today's equivalent prices PGW was pulling in over \$ 500,000 per serialisation in the 1930s.

Elliot Milstein provided an examination of the business efforts of Ukridge. Amongst the many questions he posed was: "Can you buy chickens on tick?", followed by facts on chicken-feed costs in 1905 and the business school analysis that 'Ukridge had no marketing plan or distribution network'.

Elliott was followed by Norman Murphy whose heroic effort to prove, with a hand-drawn map of the British Isles and a walking stick, that the Bramley-on-Sea in fiction is based on Bexhill-on-Sea in Sussex was almost thwarted at the very beginning. Just as Murphy was about to launch into his exposition a hand shot up in the audience. "Before you start, could you speak more slowly?", came the question. "No," barked Norman, and was off with his slide show.

After lunch and a lightning business meeting John Fletcher provided advice on being a publisher with the help of some rich words of Wodehouse and was then followed by Gretchen Worden with a presentation on cow-creamers. She has hundreds and provided a serious classification of them. The relatively mundane 'German-Dutch' gave way to 'Japanese Cutesy-Style' and 'Asian with Harpo Marx Hairstyles' before finishing with 'Illinois with Abraham Lincoln on the Side'. The audience, like several of the cow-creamers, were on their knees and helpless by the end.

The laughter continued when the NEWTS, the New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society, provided a richly costumed and multi-scened version of *The Mirth of a Nation*. This featured such historical figures as John Rupert Baxter Adams, General George Bertie Wooster Washington and Thomas Wilmot Mulliner Jefferson. Someone called Benjamin Emsworth Franklin demanded that a pig be made the new nation's emblem. A chef called Anatole Lafayette produced porcupine sausage.

The dénouement came when Betsy Madeline Bassett Ross, charged with the design of the nation's new flag, produced stripes of pastel pink and an array of daisies in the top left-hand corner, pointing out, as we all know, that 'the stars are God's daisy chain'. A rousing chorus to the tune of *Yankee Doodle Dandy* finishing with the line 'and keep your Wodehouse handy' brought the proceedings to a close.

The evening's banquet was staggered to hear that the 'Guess The Weight of The Empress of Blandings' contest had been rigged. But equilibrium was restored with Neil Midkiff at the piano and the singing of Wodehouse lyrics to a late hour.

On Sunday a brisk brunch was entertained by the Blandings Castle Chapter from San Francisco in a reading of *Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend*. Ed Ratcliffe excelled as his Lordship, Marilyn MacGregor brought elements of cockney to the Girl Friend and Bill Franklin brought a head of fiery red hair topped by a tam o'shanter to his role of Angus McAllister. Fittingly waves of laughter brought the convention to a close.



# The Bibliographic Corner by Nick Townend

## Addendum to McIlvaine

September 2001 saw the publication of the long-awaited and much-needed *Addendum to McIlvaine*. It therefore seems appropriate to concentrate on the *Addendum*, rather than on a specific aspect of Wodehouse's output, in this quarter's column.

McIlvaine's original bibliography was published in 1990 and remains the standard reference work. Inevitably, there were omissions in *McIlvaine*, and these have become more apparent as more Wodehouse material is discovered. In addition, the flow of new publications over the last 10 years has meant that there is much new material to be brought to book. The *Addendum* therefore fills a long-felt want. Every home should have one.

The *Addendum* was compiled under the auspices of The International Wodehouse Association, an umbrella organisation which embraces the various national Wodehouse societies around the world. Work began on the *Addendum* in March 2000, when an appeal for contributions was made by the national societies. Each national society had a co-ordinator for the responses, who forwarded them to the overall compiler, Tony Ring, the President of The International Wodehouse Association, who prepared the typescript and oversaw its progress through the printers to publication.

The result is a handsome and useful volume of 56 pages, on paper of the same size and quality as *Wooster Sauce*, but with stiffer covers. The *Addendum* begins with a letter of support from Eileen McIlvaine herself, followed by an appreciation of the original *McIlvaine* and an introduction to the *Addendum*. The main body of the *Addendum* is divided into most of the same sections as *McIlvaine* (eg novels, omnibuses, plays, periodicals, translations), but with some important new sections not in *McIlvaine*: notably paperback editions, audiotapes and vinyl and CD recordings. Throughout the *Addendum* there are illustrations of the relevant material in most of the sections. Last, but certainly not least, is the list of contributors, who freely shared their hard-won knowledge of Wodehouse *arcana* so that the *Addendum* could be produced.

As is obvious from its title, the *Addendum* is designed to be read in conjunction with *McIlvaine*. *McIlvaine's* original reference system is retained, albeit expanded in certain places. Some sections of the *Addendum* are best read with *McIlvaine* to hand – for example, the information to assist in identifying

first editions of the novels and the further entries in magazines already listed in *McIlvaine*. Other sections stand alone and can sensibly be read on their own – for example, the paperbacks and audio recordings.

Indeed, the section on paperbacks, which comprises 10 of the 56 pages, is likely to be of most interest to the general reader, as distinct to the collector. It lists paperbacks produced in English by different publishers in the UK, USA, India and Sweden, and is designed to enable readers to identify where to obtain copies of as many Wodehouse titles as possible as quickly as possible. As the print run of the *Addendum* was only 170, and was almost fully sold out to pre-publication orders, presumably from collectors, the paperback section is deserving of a wider audience. The International Wodehouse Association might like to consider making the section available as a separate pamphlet, similar to the various information sheets produced by the UK society. Similarly, the 8 pages devoted to translations might usefully be made available as a separate pamphlet for the overseas societies.

Some minor criticisms arise. There are a few misprints, and the odd occasion where a reference to 'page XX' has not been updated with the correct page number. The lack of an index reduces one's ability to use the *Addendum* as a reference source, particularly if attempting to discover whether or where a particular story was serialised. There are some absences in the section entitled *Imitations, Parodies and Flights of Fancy* where the deliberate restriction in the scope of the *Addendum* resulted in the unfortunate omission of *Lord Emsworth's Annotated Whiffle*, edited by James Hogg, and *The Reminiscences of the Hon Galahad Threepwood*, edited by NTPMurphy. Overall, however, the *Addendum* is invaluable. When one considers that the efforts of the contributors and compiler were all voluntary, any criticisms become captious.

Already, however, the *Addendum* is out of date. In addition to the two omissions mentioned above, other examples will continue to come to light. However, The International Wodehouse Association has proposed regular updates, and Tony Ring ends his introduction to the *Addendum* with the hope that 'an enthusiast who is also an expert at data processing' might contact him. Now is surely the time for all good men or women to come to the aid of the party.



## Society News

### Two New Patrons

The Society is delighted to announce that Simon Callow and Murray Hedgcock have agreed to become Patrons.

Simon Callow is a renowned actor who has recently won an award for his audiobook rendition of *Thank You, Jeeves*, and he described his early introduction to P G Wodehouse in an article in the June issue of *Wooster Sauce*.

Murray Hedgcock is an Australian journalist who celebrated 35 years in the United Kingdom in October. Members have been privileged to receive his regular contributions on a variety of topics, all written with the lightest touch and gentlest humour.

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### Society Merchandise

#### *McIlvaine Addendum*

A considerable majority of the mere 170 copies of the *McIlvaine Addendum* which were printed were distributed to those who had placed orders in advance. Following the Convention in Philadelphia, where the *Addendum* was officially launched by The International Wodehouse Association, there remain some ten copies available for sale to members. As foreshadowed in September's *Wooster Sauce*, these may be purchased for £15 post-free in the UK, or £16 elsewhere. Payment by sterling cheque payable to A J Ring, please, at the address on the foot of page 24.

See page 19 for a review of the publication by Nick Townend.

#### *Fred Bassett & Jeeves Notelets*

Packs of twelve notelets (with envelopes) featuring a cartoon of Jeeves and Fred Bassett, illustrated in *Wooster Sauce* in June, make excellent Christmas presents. At the time of writing there only remain about twenty packs for sale, costing £5 post-free worldwide. Sterling cheques payable to 'The P G Wodehouse Society (UK)' please, sent to Tony Ring at the address on the foot of page 24.

#### *The Land Where The Good Songs Go*

If there still are members who have not bought this excellent recording (see page 13) it is now available in record shops at £15.99 in the UK.

### Kid Brady Number 4

Members of longer standing will recall that no issue of *By The Way* is circulated with this issue of *Wooster Sauce*. Instead, the Society sends a specially published Kid Brady story as a Christmas bonus to those members in their second or later year of membership.

This year's story, *How Kid Brady Assisted a Damsel in Distress*, was first published in the American magazine, *Pearson's*, in September 1905. It will be sent to those who received the third story in the series (*How Kid Brady Won the Championship*) last year. Other qualifying members may expect to receive either number 1 (*Kid Brady, Lightweight*) or number 2 (*How Kid Brady Broke Training*).

In organising circulations of this complexity, it is always possible that errors will occur. Any member who does not receive a copy of the *Kid Brady* to which they believe they are entitled should contact the Membership Secretary, Helen Murphy.

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### The Coming of Gowf

*Barry Lane reports on an impromptu visit to the theatre by a group of members*

At the Old Red Lion Theatre, Islington, from August 21st to September 15th, the young director Ken McClymont brilliantly directed his own adaptation of five stories from *The Clicking of Cuthbert*. What a cracking result! He stands alone! His device of splitting each tale into smaller segments meant a fast start and an ever-quickening pace thereafter.

The young professional cast made an extremely attractive group; indeed the girls were all pippins. As the Oldest Member, King Merolchazzar, Vincent Jopp, Mabel, Arthur Jukes, Amanda Trivett, Mortimer Sturgis, Mary Somerset *et al* came and went with some brio, we may even have enjoyed it all more than the players did themselves

Amongst the Society's group in the audience of the very small theatre was Charles Wodehouse, a member of the Addington Club and guardian of probity in all matters of Wodehousean golf. Ken McClymont was delighted to meet him, and the thought occurs that this show, perhaps in abbreviated form, would make an excellent cabaret for any Golf Club event.



## Dates for Right Ho, Wodehouse! Spring Tour

Christopher Owen has provided the following dates in respect of performances of his one man show on the life of P G Wodehouse (in word and song) as reported by Lord Emsworth.

### February:

26th	Brading New Town Hall	Isle of Wight
27th	Wilberforce Hall, Brighton	Isle of Wight
28th	Totland Church Hall	Isle of Wight

### March:

2nd	Dartmouth Naval College	Devon
7th	Astor Theatre, Deal	Kent
15th	Harwell	Oxfordshire
16th	Pamber Heath	Hampshire
22nd	Cumnor	Oxfordshire
27th	Stokesley	Yorkshire
28th	Helmsley Arts Theatre	Yorkshire

For more details about some of these locations, and information on how to make bookings, contact Christopher Owen

## A 1903 Edition of A Prefect's Uncle is Offered For Sale

Jenny Blanchard has notified us that she has for sale a 1903 copy of *A Prefect's Uncle*, published by A & C Black and is inviting offers. She does not specify whether it is the first edition (which requires only a single book, *The Pothunters*, to be mentioned on the obverse of the half-title). The edge of the cover is slightly rubbed. The illustration on page 162 is missing and that on page 128 is detached and slightly damaged.

Anyoner interested in pursuing the matter is invited to telephone Jenny Blanchard on 020 8985 0969.

*(Please be aware that the Society can take no responsibility whatsoever for any aspect of a transaction which may ensue as a result of this note.)*

### Four More from Everyman

Everyman have published the third group of four titles in their Collectors series. They are *Heavy Weather*, *Laughing Gas*, *The Mating Season* and *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit*.

## Solutions to 'A Sauce of Misquotation'

Nigel Rees provides the original sources to the quotations on page 9

1 Keats: *On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer*.

2 'Macbeth, sir, a character in a play of that name by William Shakespeare. He was described as letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would" like the poor cat i' th' adage.'

3 'I think you may be referring to the ghost of the father of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, sir. Addressing his son, he said: "I could a tale unfold whose lightest word would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood, make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres, thy knotted and combined locks to part and each particular hair to stand on end like quills upon the fretful porpentine [porcupine]."

4 'They are as venomous as the poison of a serpent: even like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears; Which refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer: charm he never so wisely' – *Psalm 58:4 (Book of Common Prayer version)*.

5 Typewriter exercise – possibly originated by Charles E Weller, a court reporter in Milwaukee, to test the efficiency of the first practical typewriter (1867), which his friend, Christopher L Scholes, had

made. However, in his book *The Early History of the Typewriter* (1918), Weller does not claim credit for the coinage.

6 Burns: *Auld Lang Syne*:

We twa hae run about the braes,  
And pou'd the gowans [plucked the daisies] fine.'

7 Tennyson: *Merlin and Vivien, Idylls of the King*:

It is the little rift within the lute,  
That by and by will make the music mute,  
And ever widening slowly silence all.'

8 Byron: *The Destruction of Sennacherib*:

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold.

9 Browning: *Pippa Passes*

10 Charles Kingsley: *A Farewell To CEG*:

And so make Life, and Death, and that For Ever,  
One grand sweet song.'

These quotations (except Nos. 5, 6 and 10) are listed in the 1999 edition of *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* and so are not difficult to trace.



## Recent Press Comment

*Radio Times*, August 18 (from Peter Viggers)

Barry Norman, previewing a Cary Grant film season on BBC2, wrote:

Cary Grant wasn't created to brush with reality but to exist in a time warp of his own, not unlike the one invented by P G Wodehouse for Bertie Wooster – an ideal world of handsome men and beautiful women where money was never a problem and screwball comedy reigned supreme.

*Daily Mail* August 24

David Ambrose, author, included two books in his response to the question 'What book would you take on a desert island?' One was *Godel, Escher, Bach* by Douglas Hofstadter ('One of the most remarkable books I have ever come across – a meditation on the nature of mind, consciousness and logic'). He added that he would also sneak a PGW Omnibus under his jacket to keep him sane.

*Sunday Times*, August 26

A review of *Fury* by Salman Rushdie mentioned that his time-travelling Spinoza is stated to be a great fan of Jeeves.

*Independent*, August 31 (from Edward Cazalet)

An editorial on the need for a National Theatre asked why it should not put on a musical by PGW, instead of the 'grinding obviousness of *My Fair Lady*'.

*Observer*, September 2

The paper had run an article the previous week on the fashion for personal trainers, and commented that 'it seems only yesterday he was born'. J A P Dutton wrote to remind readers that personal trainers appeared in two or three early PGW novels, such as *Piccadilly Jim* (1917), in which one visited a business tycoon daily at his home.

*Radio 4*, September 6

In the programme *Simon Fanshawe Gets to the Bottom of Drink*, he quoted Matthew Parris's favourite quotation on the subject, from PGW: "I lay in bed and a cat stamped into the room."

*Radio 4*, September 10-14

Robert McCrum presented a five minute programme *Work-in-Progress* each day, discussing aspects of his forthcoming PGW biography.

*Observer*, September 13 (from Hilary Bruce)

Christina Hardyment reported Simon Callow's achievement in winning an audiobook award for 'abridged classic fiction' with *Thank You, Jeeves*.

*Times*, September 14

An article entitled *Good Egg Tells All – Bertie (Philip Howard) Wooster relishes the chance to review the book of the millennium* concerned the completion of the eight-volume *Millennium Wodehouse Concordance*

*Observer*, September 16

Robert McCrum wrote about the rewritten serialised novel, *A Prince for Hire* (see *Wooster Sauce* for September, page 1) in a news article entitled *Found: The Novel Wodehouse Wrote Twice*.

*Guardian*, September 22 (from Peter Wightman)

In an interview 'voicing the black experience', author Diran Adebayo commented that the only places that his Nigerian parents would let him go after school were Sainsbury's and the local library, where he read 80 or 90 books by PGW before moving on to Becket, Sartre and Camus. The article concludes:

The love of language is what fires Adebayo up: street-smart coinages, as well as the well-honed quips of writers in his own canon, make it worth preserving. He relishes such Wodehouse-isms as: 'I could tell that, if he was not exactly disgruntled, he was far from grunted.'

*Times*, September 28

Philip Howard's article on Ian Duncan Smith reviewed other variations on the name 'Smith' and inevitably mentioned Psmith.

*Theatregoer*, October (from John Baesch)

Interviewed Martin Jarvis in connection with the forthcoming release of the video *By Jeeves* (see page 16) and quoted him as saying: "My take on [Jeeves] is that he is very urbane and respectable – with a slight twinkle occasionally when you least expect it."

*The Mirror*, (from Murray Hedgcock)

Claimed that Vinny Jones was being lined up to play Jeeves in a film of the *By Jeeves* musical.

*USA Today*, early October (from Susan Cohen)

Included *The Most of P G Wodehouse* in a list of ten books selected to help chase away readers' worries.

*Radio 4*, October 8

In *Quote, Unquote*, answering a question on *Psalms 42 ('Deep calling to deep')* panellist Max Hastings agreed with chairman Nigel Rees that Wodehouse was the best-read twentieth-century novelist and used the widest range of allusions.



*Recent Press Comment, continued*

*Bucks Examiner*, October 12

An article about the completion of *The Millennium Wodehouse Concordance* was written by Helen Osborne, a great-niece of Richard Osborne.

*Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 15

Carlo Romano, *Inquirer* Book Critic, wrote a long piece summarising his experience at the TWS Philadelphia convention.

*New York Times*, October 15

Carried an Associated Press report (the AP reporter having been at the convention) about events at Philadelphia, which included the lines:

For an escapist weekend, passionate readers became the scary aunts, flamboyant playboys and fluffy women who inhabit the writer's light-hearted British novels. It was a brief retreat from increasingly scary real life into a timeless, idyllic place.

*Asian Age* (New Delhi), October 16 (from Sushmita Sen Gupta)

Under the headline *Jeeves Missing at Wodehouse Meet*, it carried extracts from the AP report. The headline referred to the fact that no one at the convention took the *nom de plum* 'Jeeves'.

*Times*, October 17

Alan Coren's column satirised the concept of fiction sponsored by commercial interests. One book he selected was *Carry On, Jeeves* and his extract promoted DHL and Gordon's Gin.

*Classic FM*, November

Carried a photo of Hal Cazalet and Sylvia McNair on its news pages, with a preview of their CD and Wigmore Hall concert.

*Hotline* (Virgin Trains magazine), Autumn

An article concerning the revival of the *gentleman's gentleman* oddly said that the grand-daddy of all *butlers* is PGW's Jeeves.

*Times*, October 27

Devoted half page 2 to two articles: one by Emma Hartley (with a large picture) about the marriage of Norman Murphy and Elin Woodger (see our front page), including words of congratulation and delight from our President, Richard Briers, and the second, by Tim Reid, reviewing the tendency of Bertie Wooster to become engaged, but never quite take the final steps to the altar.

**POETS' CORNER**

**To Thomas,**

**(Who Is Halfway Through a Bath Bun)**

Misguided infant, stay your hand:  
 Considering what you're chewing;  
 I see you do not understand  
 The fearful deed you're doing,  
 And how you're crushing (so to speak)  
 Your young and innocent physique.  
 Attend to me while I expound  
 A lecture, of alarm full;  
 It seems that medicos have found  
 That buns are very harmful.  
 They sap the mind and stunt the growth –  
 One or the other, maybe both.  
 If at the age of ten a lad  
 Upon this fell comestible  
 (Which, Thomas, I need scarcely add,  
 Is highly indigestible)  
 Elects without restraint to feed,  
 At twenty he's a perfect weed.  
 His legs and arms are weak and thin,  
 His frame is poor and meagre,  
 No muscle lurks beneath his skin,  
 He looks like Wee MacGregor:  
 At twenty-five his hearse is seen  
 Bowling along towards Kensal Green.  
 But he who hates such foolish ways,  
 And does not spend his youth in 'em,  
 Who never mentions buns with praise,  
 And never sets a tooth in 'em,  
 Acquires ere long, as you may guess,  
 A sort of Johnny Trundleyness.  
 His form increases day by day  
 In strength and grace and prettiness:  
 His biceps soon exhibit a  
 Madrali-Hackenschmidtiness.  
 And long before he's left his teens  
 He's breaking Try-Your-Weight machines.  
 So take, I beg you, while you can,  
 To other forms of diet:  
 Live on a nobler, simpler plan;  
 It's not too late to try it.  
 Reform at once, and I'll engage  
 You'll reach a hearty, green old age.  
 If ginger-beer is to your mind,  
 Promote its crisp and jolly pop;  
 Chew chocolate if you're inclined,  
 And suck the nimble lollipop:  
 But oh! Reject, abjure and shun  
 The deadly and insidious bun.

From *Vanity Fair*, 11 August, 1904

(Following a report that buns are at the bottom of half the physical degeneracy of the modern Briton.)



## FUTURE EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

February 19, 2002 – The Savage Club (NEW DATE)

The first meeting of the New Year. The Savage Club is in the premises of The National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London, close to Charing Cross Station, and members gather from around 6pm. The Chairman will be presenting a short piece on *Pig-Calls, Past and Present*. Note, the 19th, NOT the 12th.

April 13, 2002 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk

Join the Chairman on one of his famous walks round Wodehouse's London. Call Norman Murphy to book a place, and to find out where and when to meet.

June 8, 2002 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk (see above)

June 21, 2002 – Cricket at Dulwich

The annual match between the Gold Bats and the Dulwich Dusters. Now is the time to contact Bob Miller if you are interested in playing.

July 2, 2002 – The Savage Club

The summer meeting, for which details will be provided later.

July 20, 2002 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk (see above)

September 14, 2002 – Murphy's Wodehouse Walk (see above)

October 17, 2002 – Society's Formal Dinner at Lincoln's Inn

Advance notice of the Society's biennial formal dinner, to be held at Lincoln's Inn. This will be a black tie event, with attendance restricted to around 100, and we hope to be able to offer some interesting after-dinner entertainment. Ticket application forms will be circulated with June's *Wooster Sauce*.

November 12, 2002 – The Savage Club

The final meeting of the year, for which details will again be provided later.

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## EDITOR'S TAILPIECES

A reminder that members joining the Society between November and March have the option of paying £ 20 for membership extended until May 2003. This applies equally to gift memberships, so do consider the possibility of Christmas present memberships for your friends.

Arthur Marsh, a nonegenarian from Australia who has been reading Wodehouse since he went into domestic service in 1915, visited the Editor for tea in September whilst on an annual visit to see his family. He told me that whilst a footman in the 1920s he served in the house next door to that of PGW in Norfolk Street, London, and regularly saw him walk the dogs in Hyde Park. He confirmed that the pub *The Running Footman* in Hay's Mews had been used by tradition by domestic staff of the period as described by Norman Murphy in *By The Way No 1*. His final position in service was as valet, resident in the British Embassy in Paris, serving Rudyard Kipling's son-in-law!

The Russian P G Wodehouse Society, whose members have to date communicated through the internet, held their first meeting on October 15. A report and picture will appear in the March issue.

One casualty of the events of September 11 was the full day seminar on P G Wodehouse which was to be held in Washington. There is thus no report of the event in this issue. Another cancellation has been a planned Middle East tour of *Right Ho, Wodehouse*, the one-man show developed by Christopher Owen. Dates for his UK spring tour are given on page 21.

Michael Bailey of Dorset has written to remind us of comments about Wodehouse by his Dulwich Headmaster WRM Gilkes, as included in *Raymond Chandler, a Biography*, by Tom Hiney:

He is a most impactical boy ... often forgetful, he finds difficulty in the most simple things and asks absurd questions, whereas he can understand the most difficult things. He has the most distorted ideas about wit and humour; ...